

We Are One

Fireside Activities to accompany the video
" We Are One"

A collaborative project by
*the National Education and Schools Office,
the National Education Task Force, and
the National Teaching Committee*

Introduction to Firesides Accompanying the "We Are One" Videotape



In order to make the greatest possible use of the nation-wide broadcasts of the "We Are One" video, the National Spiritual Assembly has developed and distributed five firesides to be used in conjunction with the video. Each fireside workshop is approximately 90 minutes in length, including time to view the "We Are One" videotape. If the friends gathered have recently seen the video, it is not required to show it again.

These firesides are intended to explore the concept of who we are as creations of God, what defines us as human beings, and our connections to the rest of humanity. While the topics are profound, the firesides are essentially designed to promote joy and a sense of discovery as Bahá'ís and friends of the Faith investigate humanity's basic oneness. Several of these firesides are derived from the Fundamental Verities Course Series, Part Three: A New Civilization. The entire Fundamental Verities Course Series is available from the Bahá'í Distribution Service: 1-800-999-9019.

We encourage the fireside host and/or workshop facilitator to read about the different methods of teaching and learning suggested by the Writings in our Faith in the book, *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*, available through the Bahá'í Distribution Service. We also suggest that you contact any Core Curriculum Trainers to assist with the facilitation of these workshops. Please contact the National Teacher Training Center at Louhelen Bahá'í School (810) 653-5033, or send an e-mail message to: louhelen@usbnc.org if you need help identifying Core Curriculum trainers in your area.

We suggest that the fireside host or workshop facilitator carefully consider how to create an atmosphere to facilitate spiritual learning. While there is much flexibility in how this might be achieved, we have found that advance preparation of the devotional readings and the environment creates a more reverent and relaxed atmosphere for Bahá'ís and seekers alike to receive the Word of God.

The host or facilitator may wish to have some related resources available to the fireside guests on related topics. Consider making available these small booklets/pamphlets available from the Bahá'í Distribution Service.

- *The Vision of Race Unity*—A Statement by the National Spiritual Assembly
- *Two Wings of a Bird: the Equality of Women and Men*—A Statement by the National Spiritual Assembly
- *The Light of Unity—The Family; The Light of Unity—The Power of Prayer; The Light of Unity—The Power of Race Unity*—three different full-color pamphlets

Other possible resources include:

- *Bahá'í Marriage and Family Life*, compilation of Bahá'í Writings (available from the Bahá'í Distribution Service 1-800-999-9019)
- *Violence Free Society—A Gift to Our Children* by Dr. Hossain Danesh (booklet, available from Special Ideas 1-800-326-1197)
- *The Glorious Journey—a Bahá'í Approach to Work and Service* by W. Craig Weaver and Helen M. Bond (available from the Bahá'í Distribution Service)



Some specific guidelines for facilitating these workshops:

Use the Master as our example. Constantly bringing to mind the life and words of our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá will assist you to respond in a loving manner to these precious friends. Please feel free to personally study and reflect upon some of the writings and prayers of 'Abdu'l-Bahá before you begin so that you will have His image clearly in mind when delivering the workshops.

Use the Sacred Texts as a basis for your answers. When answering questions, try to refer to the answers that can be found in the Writings.

Be sensitive to varying levels of literacy. If the amount of reading or number of quotations suggested in the workshops becomes a burden to the friends, select 2-3 quotations to study rather than an entire page. If the friends are not comfortable reading in English, either memorize (as a group) one quotation for each activity that can become the basis for that activity, or team readers with non-readers for group activities.

Keep your comments brief. Creating an atmosphere where the participants themselves feel free to share their views and concerns necessitates that the facilitators keep their presentations and answers brief. Allow the participants to have the opportunity to connect their hearts to Bahá 'u'lláh through use of the Sacred Texts.

Practice patience and sensitivity. All participants come with something unique to offer and assisting them to realize that their contributions are important is part of making people feel welcome.

Be happy! An uplifting environment will always make learning easier and a cheerful presenter can really make all the difference. You will find your own Faith renewed as you joyfully assist the friends to come to a deeper understanding of the mystery of prayer and meditation.

Allow time for fellowship. Following the structured parts of the fireside gathering, encourage informal conversation to occur so that friends of the Faith can raise additional questions in a less formal setting.

Make liberal use of music. Selections from a diverse array of musical styles may enhance spiritual learning and appeal to people of many different backgrounds. Some sources include: music of the Bahá 'í Gospel Choir; music from the Bahá 'í World Congress; *Songs of the Ancient Beauty*, parts I and II; and music from these artists: Narges, Red Grammer, El Viento Canta, Kevin Locke, Matthew Levine, Mary Davis, Seaforth and Jenkins, Kiu Haghghi, Paul Parrish (*Hidden Words* put to music), Remembrance Ensemble (a cappella *Hidden Words* renderings), and instrumental jazz pieces, as well as classical music, are possibilities.

Materials Checklist for Workshop Facilitators

Advance Preparation and Materials Needed for All Workshops:

- photocopy the set of pages for the workshop you are facilitating for each participant or guest
- TV/VCR and videotape: *We Are One* (optional if seen recently)
- prayer book(s)
- copies of small prayer books and *The Light of Unity* pamphlet series
- flip chart and markers
- blank paper for recording personal notes and reflections
- pens/pencils

Creating a Spiritual Environment:

- special touches—flowers, candles, a picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá—may set the tone and signal that this learning experience is intended to touch the heart
- extensive use of diverse music to set the tone before the fireside or workshop gets started and at any appropriate time during the program
- refreshments—something very simple such as ice water, coffee, tea, cookies—to offer either during a break or following the workshop

Specific Workshop Materials:

Fireside #1

- copies of quotes, God's New Creation Parts One and Two" for each participant
- enough Play Dough, modeling clay, or beeswax in assorted colors for each participant.

Fireside #2

- carefully cut out magazine pictures: pictures from *National Geographic Magazine*, or any magazine or calendar with pictures from nature, e.g. birds, animals, insects, waterfalls, mountains, etc.
- copies of quotes "Family Unity and World Peace" for each participant

Fireside #3

- copies of quotes "Work as Worship" cut apart
- items for science demonstration (see p. 15)

Fireside #4

- copies of quotes "One Family, One Country, One World" for each participant
- blank paper for journal writing or drawing
- small blank greeting cards and envelopes, or paper that can be folded into cards
- simple arts and crafts supplies, e.g. markers, glue, scissors, different kinds of paper, feathers, or other inexpensive, readily available materials

Fireside #5

- copies of quotations and stories on a specific spiritual quality for each group
- small bags with 3-5 different items for each group (see p. 20)
- copy of directions for each group

God's New Creation

Purpose: To understand the oneness of the human family by looking at our physical and spiritual origins.

Fireside/Workshop/Meeting
90 minutes

Carefully prepare the learning environment to reflect hospitality, beauty, friendliness and love. Lovingly greet the guests as they arrive. You may also wish to have soft, instrumental music playing as the guests come in.

Opening prayer(s). When possible, include the use of music, recorded or sung

Introduction

Begin by explaining to the guests or participants that the purpose of the gathering is to investigate our physical and spiritual ties to one another.

We Are One Video

Have the guests watch the video (or telecast) of "We Are One" (approximately 30 minutes).

Learning Experience

Ask participants to form groups of two. In these teams of two, carefully read aloud the quotations on the following pages entitled, "God's New Creation" *Part One* and come up with answers to the focus questions. Next, invite each team to combine with one other team. In these groups of four, carefully read aloud the selected passages from the Writings entitled, "God's New Creation" *Part Two* and answer the focus questions.

Reconvene the entire group, and invite a few of the participants to share with the large group one statement from the Writings that offered an entirely new idea that they had not previously considered.

While still in the whole group and having the participants reflect on the quotations just read, play quiet background music while you invite them to individually and silently reflect for a few minutes on the question:
How am I connected to the rest of humanity?

Hand out some play-dough, modeling clay, or beeswax to each participant. Using these materials, ask each person to create an image of how our common origin makes us all members of one family. Invite participants to consider sharing that image with others in the large group, or simply share with someone sitting nearby.

Closing

Conclude by mentioning again the Bahá'í perspective that we are all, in reality, one human family.

Invite participants to investigate the Bahá'í Faith.

Close the session with prayer, either spoken, chanted or sung.

God's New Creation *Part One*



Focus Questions:

- I'm just one person...how can I change anything?
- How is it possible that I can have an effect on the billions of human beings on the planet?

Through the movement of Our Pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this world-wide regeneration.

BAHA'U'LLAH: *Gleanings*, Pages: 92-93

"The world of being shineth, in this Day, with the resplendency of this Divine Revelation. All created things extol its saving grace, and sing its praises. The universe is wrapt in an ecstasy of joy and gladness. The Scriptures of past Dispensations celebrate the great Jubilee that must needs greet this most great Day of God. Well is it with him that hath lived to see this Day, and hath recognized its station."

SHOGHI EFFENDI: *The Advent of Divine Justice*, Page: 78

Likewise, reflect upon the perfection of man's creation, and that all these planes and states are folded up and hidden away within him.

Dost thou reckon thyself only a puny form
When within thee the universe is folded?

Then we must labor to destroy the animal condition, till the meaning of humanity shall come to light.

BAHA'U'LLAH: *Seven Valleys and Four Valleys*, Page: 34

Reflect upon the inner realities of the universe, the secret wisdoms involved, the enigmas, the inter-relationships, the rules that govern all. For every part of the universe is connected with every other part by ties that are very powerful and admit of no imbalance, nor any slackening whatever.

ABDU'L-BAHA: *Selections ... 'Abdu'l-Baha*, Page: 157

For all beings are connected together like a chain; and reciprocal help, assistance and interaction belonging to the properties of things are the causes of the existence, development and growth of created beings. It is confirmed through evidences and proofs that every being universally acts upon other beings, either absolutely or through association.

ABDU'L-BAHA: *Some Answered Questions*, Pages: 178-179

To conclude: the beings, whether great or small, are connected with one another by the perfect wisdom of God, and affect and influence one another. If it were not so, in the universal system and the general arrangement of existence, there would be disorder and imperfection.

ABDU'L-BAHA: *Some Answered Questions*, Page: 247

God's New Creation *Part Two*



Focus Questions:

- How did this all begin?
- Where did we come from?
- Do we all come from a common origin, or were some people created differently from others?

O SON OF SPIRIT! I created thee rich, why dost thou bring thyself down to poverty? Noble I made thee, wherewith dost thou abase thyself? Out of the essence of knowledge I gave thee being, why seekest thou enlightenment from anyone beside Me? Out of the clay of love I molded thee, how dost thou busy thyself with another? Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful and self-subsisting.

BAHA'U'LLAH: *Arabic Hidden Words*, Page: 13

Ye are all created out of water, and unto dust shall ye return.

BAHA'U'LLAH: *The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, Page: 73

O CHILDREN OF MEN! Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.

BAHA'U'LLAH: *Arabic Hidden Words*, Page: 68

Verily, the origin of all material life is one and its termination likewise one.

‘ABDU'L-BAHA: *Promulgation of Universal Peace**, Page: 350

Consider the world of created beings, how varied and diverse they are in species, yet with one sole origin.

‘ABDU'L-BAHA: *Paris Talks*, Pages: 51-52

The Creator of all is One God.

From this same God all creation sprang into existence, and He is the one goal, towards which everything in nature yearns.

‘ABDU'L-BAHA: *Paris Talks*, Page: 51

Family Unity and World Peace

Purpose: To look at the relationship between a unified family and cultivating a peaceful world.

Fireside/Workshop/Meeting
90 minutes

Carefully prepare the learning environment to reflect hospitality, beauty, friendliness and love. Lovingly greet the guests as they arrive. You may also wish to have soft, instrumental music playing as the guests come in.

Opening prayer(s). When possible, include the use of music, recorded or sung.

Introduction

Begin by explaining to the guests or participants that the purpose of the gathering is to begin to understand the Bahá'í perspective on the connection between a unified family and a unified world.

We Are One Video

Have the guests watch the video (or telecast) of "We Are One" (approximately 30 minutes).

Learning Experience

Have available a supply of neatly cut pictures from magazines such as *National Geographic* that represent a variety of images from nature, including water, the sky, space, various sorts of countryside, animals, and human families or other groups of people interacting together.

Invite the participants to join one or two others and read aloud the quotations on the following pages entitled, "Family Unity and World Peace." Discuss the focus questions in the small group.

Invite each person to choose a picture from the magazine picture collection provided that visually represents the relationship of family unity to world peace. Invite each person to share that picture with his or her partner(s) and explain their reason for choosing it.

Closing

Conclude by mentioning again the Bahá'í perspective that world peace starts with the relationships within the home.

Invite participants to continue their investigation of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Close the session with prayer, either spoken, chanted or sung.

Family Unity and World Peace

Focus Questions:

- World peace...international unity...spiritual civilization...what do they mean in daily life?
- How specifically does a unified family promote peace?



The most vital duty, in this day, is to purify your characters, to correct your manners, and improve your conduct. The beloved of the Merciful must show forth such character and conduct among His creatures, that the fragrance of their holiness may be shed upon the whole world, and may quicken the dead, inasmuch as the purpose of the Manifestation of God and the dawning of the limitless lights of the Invisible is to educate the souls of men, and refine the character of every living man - so that blessed individuals, who have freed themselves from the murk of the animal world, shall rise up with those qualities which are the adornings of the reality of man. The purpose is that earthlings should turn into the people of Heaven, and those who walk in darkness should come into the light, and those who are excluded should join the inner circle of the Kingdom, and those who are as nothing should become intimates of the everlasting Glory.

‘ABDU’L-BAHA: *Selections ... ‘Abdu’l-Baha*, Pages: 10-11

Compare the nations of the world to the members of a family. A family is a nation in miniature. Simply enlarge the circle of the household, and you have the nation. Enlarge the circle of nations, and you have all humanity. The conditions surrounding the family surround the nation. The happenings in the family are the happenings in the life of the nation. Would it add to the progress and advancement of a family if dissensions should arise among its members, all fighting, pillaging each other, jealous and revengeful of injury, seeking selfish advantage? Nay, this would be the cause of the effacement of progress and advancement. So it is in the great family of nations, for nations are but an aggregate of families. Therefore, as strife and dissension destroy a family and prevent its progress, so nations are destroyed and advancement hindered.

‘ABDU’L-BAHA: *Promulgation of Universal Peace**, Page: 157

According to the teachings of Baha'u'llah the family, being a human unit, must be educated according to the rules of sanctity. All the virtues must be taught the family. The integrity of the family bond must be constantly considered, and the rights of the individual members must not be transgressed. The rights of the son, the father, the mother - none of them must be transgressed, none of them must be arbitrary. Just as the son has certain obligations to his father, the father, likewise, has certain obligations to his son. The mother, the sister and other members of the household have their certain prerogatives. All these rights and prerogatives must be conserved, yet the unity of the family must be sustained. The injury of one shall be considered the injury of all; the comfort of each, the comfort of all; the honor of one, the honor of all.

‘ABDU’L-BAHA: *Promulgation of Universal Peace**, Page: 168

From separation doth every kind of hurt and harm proceed, but the union of created things doth ever yield most laudable results. From the pairing of even the smallest particles in the world of being are the grace and bounty of God made manifest; and the higher the degree, the more momentous is the union. `Glory be to Him Who hath created all the pairs, of such things as earth produceth, and out of men themselves, and of things beyond their ken.'(1) And above all other unions is that between human beings, especially when it cometh to pass in the love of God. Thus is the primal oneness made to appear; thus is laid the foundation of love in the spirit.

`ABDU'L-BAHA: *Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha*, Page: 119

“By what process,’ continued the questioner, ‘will this peace on earth be established? Will it come at once after a universal declaration of the Truth?’

“No, it will come about gradually,’ said ‘Abdu'l-Bahá. ‘A plant that grows too quickly lasts but a short time. You are my family,’ and he looked about with a smile, ‘my new children! If a family lives in unison, great results are obtained. Widen the circle; when a city lives in intimate accord greater results will follow, and a continent that is fully united will likewise unite all other continents. Then will be the time of the greatest results, for all the inhabitants of the earth belong to one native land.’”

‘ABDU'L-BAHA, *‘Abdu'l-Bahá In London*, p. 106

Work as Worship of God

Purpose:
To understand the Bahá'í perspective on work.

Fireside/Workshop/Meeting
90 minutes

Carefully prepare the learning environment to reflect hospitality, beauty, friendliness and love. Lovingly greet the guests as they arrive. You may also wish to have soft, instrumental music playing as the guests come in.

Opening prayer(s). When possible, include the use of music, recorded or sung.

Introduction

Begin by explaining to the guests or participants that the purpose of the gathering is to begin to understand how the Bahá'í perspective on work is distinct from the commonly held view that work is primarily a means to earn money in order to live.

We Are One Video

Have the guests watch the video (or telecast) of "We Are One" (approximately 30 minutes).

Learning Experience

Before guests arrive, cut apart the "Work as Worship" quotations from the following pages and pass out one quotation to each participant willing to read. Read the quotations aloud in the large group. Have the following three questions written so everyone can see them. Ask for reactions from the participants—turn to someone sitting nearby and answer at least one of the following questions:

- What can we gather about the Bahá'í perspective on work?
- How does this view expand the importance and necessity of work?
- What are some of the implications of effort being an "inseparable part of man's life?"

Share any insights with the whole group. You may wish to record the insights on chart paper and post them for all to see.

Next, perform a simple science experiment (either A, B or one that you know) that demonstrates how energy, or effort, can be transferred to other objects to create unexpected results. After completing the demonstration, invite the friends to discuss the question:

For experiment A: In what way does the simple action of placing our hands on the bottle illustrate the contributions that we all make to human civilization through our work?

For experiment B: In what way does the simple action of stroking the balloon with a piece of cloth illustrate the contributions that we all make to human civilization through our work?

Closing

Conclude by mentioning again the Bahá'í perspective that any work done in the spirit of service to humanity is worshiping God.

Invite participants to continue to investigate the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and their practical value in our lives.

Close the session with prayer, either spoken, chanted or sung.

Work as Worship



It is enjoined upon every one of you to engage in some form of occupation, such as crafts, trades and the like. We have graciously exalted your engagement in such work to the rank of worship unto God, the True One. Ponder ye in your hearts the grace and the blessings of God and render thanks unto Him at eventide and at dawn. Waste not your time in idleness and sloth. Occupy yourselves with that which profiteth yourselves and others. Thus hath it been decreed in this Tablet from whose horizon the day-star of wisdom and utterance shineth resplendent.

The most despised of men in the sight of God are those who sit idly and beg. Hold ye fast unto the cord of material means, placing your whole trust in God, the Provider of all means. When anyone occupieth himself in a craft or trade, such occupation itself is regarded in the estimation of God as an act of worship; and this is naught but a token of His infinite and all-pervasive bounty.

BAHA'U'LLAH: *Tablets of Baha'u'llah*, Page: 26

Blessed are those who have fixed their gaze on the realm of glory and have followed the commandments of the Lord of Names. Blessed is he who in the days of God will engage in handicrafts. This is a bounty from God, for in this Most Great Dispensation it is acceptable in the sight of God for man to occupy himself in a trade which relieveth him of depending upon charity. The craft of every craftsman is regarded as worship.

One of the names of God is the Fashioner. He loveth craftsmanship. . . . Craftsmanship is a book among the books of divine sciences, and a treasure among the treasures of His heavenly wisdom. This is a knowledge with meaning, for some of the sciences are brought forth by words and come to an end with words.

BAHA'U'LLAH: *The Arts*, Page: 1

"You ask about the admonition that everyone must work, and want to know if this means that you, a wife and mother, must work for a livelihood as your husband does. . . . the directive is for the friends to be engaged in an occupation which will be of benefit to mankind. Homemaking is a highly honourable and responsible work of fundamental importance for mankind."

From a letter written on behalf of the UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE to an individual believer, June 16, 1982: *Women* and in *Lights of Guidance*, Pages: 626-627

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in London (England), there was a workman who had left his bag of tools in a hall. He chanced upon the smiling Master. Sadly the workman told of his predicament: " I don't know much about religious things, as I have no time for anything but my work." Words of reassurance came in reply: "That is well. Very well. A day's work done in the spirit of service is in itself an act of worship, such work is a prayer unto God."

'ABDU'L-BAHA, quoted in *Vignettes from the Life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, by Annamarie Honnold, p. 48

For instance, a merchant may lose his trade and depression ensues. A workman is dismissed and starvation stares him in the face. A farmer has a bad harvest, anxiety fills his mind. A man builds a house which is burnt to the ground and he is straightway homeless, ruined, and in despair.

All these examples are to show you that the trials which beset our every step, all our sorrow, pain, shame and grief, are born in the world of matter; whereas the spiritual Kingdom never causes sadness. A man living with his thoughts in this Kingdom knows perpetual joy. The ills all flesh is heir to do not pass him by, but they only touch the surface of his life, the depths are calm and serene.

'ABDU'L-BAHA: *Paris Talks*, Page: 110

O MY SERVANTS! Ye are the trees of My garden; ye must give forth goodly and wondrous fruits, that ye yourselves and others may profit therefrom. Thus it is incumbent on every one to engage in crafts and professions... For results depend upon means, and the grace of God shall be all-sufficient unto you. Trees that yield no fruit have been and will ever be for the fire.

BAHA'U'LLAH: *Persian Hidden Words*, Page: 80

...be occupied always in mentioning the Lord and display effort to complete thy profession. Thou must endeavour greatly so that thou mayest become unique in thy profession and famous in those parts, because attaining perfection in one's profession in this merciful period is considered to be worship of God.

ABDU'L-BAHA: *Selections ... Abdu'l-Baha*, Pages: 145-146

Whatever the progress of the machinery may be, man will have always to toil in order to earn his living. Effort is an inseparable part of man's life. It may take different forms with the changing conditions of the world, but it will be always present as a necessary element in our earthly existence. Life is after all a struggle. Progress is attained through struggle, without such a struggle life ceases to have a meaning; it becomes even extinct. The progress of machinery has not made effort unnecessary. It has given it a new form, a new outlet.

Written on behalf of SHOGHI EFFENDI to Robert Moffett, December 26, 1935, quoted in *The Glorious Journey* by W. Craig Weaver and Helen M. Bond

It is the duty of those who are in charge of the organization of society to give every individual the opportunity of acquiring the necessary talent in some kind of profession, and also the means of utilizing such a talent, both for its own sake and for the sake of earning the means of his livelihood. Every individual, no matter how handicapped and limited he may be, is under the obligation of engaging in some work or profession, for work, specially when performed in the spirit of service, is according to Bahá'u'lláh a form of worship. It has not only a utilitarian purpose, but has a value in itself because it draws us nearer to God, and enables us to better grasp His purpose for us in this world. It is obvious, therefore, that the inheritance of wealth cannot make anyone immune from daily work.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, cited in *Bahá'í Procedures*, pp. 7-8, quoted in *The Glorious Journey* by W. Craig Weaver and Helen M. Bond

Experiment A—The Dancing Penny

You will need: an empty soft drink bottle (glass bottles are best, but plastic bottles will work); pennies, dimes, nickels; a few drops of water or cooking oil

Instructions: Chilling the bottle for several minutes before presenting the demonstration will increase the effect but is not necessary. Select a coin that will “seat” in the opening of the bottle without falling into the bottle. You may need to try different coins and bottles to find an acceptable combination.

Presentation: Lay the coin flat over the opening of the bottle. Place a few drops of water or cooking oil at the edge of the coin to form a seal between the coin and lip of the bottle. Wrap both hands around the body of the bottle. Direct participants to focus their attention on the coin. The coin will begin to tap on the lip of the bottle. If the coin does not tap, warmed air might be escaping between the coin and the lip of the bottle. Add a few more drops of water or oil. [In a closed container of any gas—including oxygen—there is a direct relationship between temperature and pressure; as temperature increases through the heat of the hands around the bottle, so does pressure. The pressure increase is caused by the increase in motion of the gas molecules as they become warmer. The added energy increases the motion of the gas molecules until they lift the coin. As some of the gas escapes, the coin drops.]

Elicit explanations and/or comments from the participants.

Experiment B—Static Charged 2 X4's

You will need: a long piece of lumber: an 8' 1 X 4, 2 X4, or 4 X 4 works well; soup ladle or ice cream scoop; lubricating oil; balloon; piece of wool cloth or fur

Instructions: Invert the soup ladle or ice cream scoop on a table top. The smooth convex surface is used as a pivot for the lumber. Place a few drops of oil on top of the curved surface. Carefully balance the board on the pivot. The oil allows the board to rotate freely. Place a static charge on the surface of the balloon by rubbing it in one direction on a piece of wool or fur. Hold the charged balloon a few inches from one end of the balanced board. The board will move toward the balloon.

Presentation: Most people are familiar with the standard static electricity demonstrations of picking up bits of paper with a charged comb or sticking a charged balloon to the wall. This is a dramatic extension to those activities! [The action of stroking the balloon with a piece of cloth causes some electrons to be dislodged from the cloth and deposited on the balloon. The electrons on the surface of the charged balloon give it a negative charge. When the balloon is held near the board, the charge on the balloon affects the position of the electrons in the board creating the opposite charge on the surface of the board. This causes the board to move.]

Elicit explanations and/or comments from the participants.

One Family, One Country, One World

Purpose: To investigate a new way of conceiving citizenship.
To promote the oneness of humanity.

Fireside/Workshop/Meeting
90 minutes

Carefully prepare the learning environment to reflect hospitality, beauty, friendliness and love. Lovingly greet the guests as they arrive. You may also wish to have soft, instrumental music playing as the guests come in.

Opening prayer(s). When possible, include the use of music, recorded or sung.

Introduction

Begin by explaining to the guests or participants that the purpose of the gathering is to begin to have a new understanding of "citizenship" and to encourage promotion of the oneness of humanity.

We Are One Video

Have the guests watch the video (or telecast) of "We Are One" (approximately 30 minutes).

Learning Experience

Invite various individuals to read aloud the quotations on the following pages entitled, "One Family, One Country, One World" in the whole group. Briefly discuss the focus question.

Put on beautiful, quiet reflective music. Provide blank paper for the participants to record their thoughts. Invite the participants to privately consider, and write or draw answers if they like, to these questions:

- Whether in the role of parent, child, spouse or single individual, how can I promote the oneness of the world of humanity?
- What specific steps can I take now to carry my idea into action?

After several minutes of quiet reflection time, invite the participants to prepare a gift card for a family member or for a member of their spiritual family. Provide blank note cards and assorted art materials for this purpose. Invite everyone to consider including a favorite passage from the quotations read in the card. Encourage the participants to make these cards as beautiful and as heartfelt as possible. Encourage the participants to complete the cards after the session is over if there is not time to complete them during this session. Offer to mail cards for any of the participants who would be assisted by that service.

Closing

Conclude by emphasizing the importance of not simply tolerating diversity, but of promoting the oneness of humanity. Remind the participants of the need to shift our perspective in regards to our concept of citizenship—that we are all citizens of the world.

Invite participants to continue investigating the teachings of Bahá 'u'llá h and their practical value in assisting us to build bonds of friendship with every member of the human family.

Close the session with prayer, either spoken, chanted or sung.

One Family, One Country, One World

Focus Question:

- How does this new idea of citizenship change the way we think about, and act toward, each other?



The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.

BAHA'U'LLAH: *Gleanings*, Page: 250

Every imperfect soul is self-centred and thinketh only of his own good. But as his thoughts expand a little he will begin to think of the welfare and comfort of his family. If his ideas still more widen, his concern will be the felicity of his fellow citizens; and if still they widen, he will be thinking of the glory of his land and of his race. But when ideas and views reach the utmost degree of expansion and attain the stage of perfection, then will he be interested in the exaltation of humankind. He will then be the well-wisher of all men and the seeker of the weal and prosperity of all lands. This is indicative of perfection.

Thus, the divine Manifestations of God had a universal and all-inclusive conception. They endeavoured for the sake of everyone's life and engaged in the service of universal education. The area of their aims was not limited - nay, rather, it was wide and all-inclusive.

Therefore, ye must also be thinking of everyone, so that mankind may be educated, character moderated and this world may turn into a Garden of Eden.

ABDU'L-BAHA: *Selections ... 'Abdu'l-Baha*, Page: 69

The people of the future will not say, "I belong to the nation of England, France or Persia"; for all of them will be citizens of a universal nationality - the one family, the one country, the one world of humanity

ABDU'L-BAHA: *Promulgation of Universal Peace**, Page: 19

This universal, this transcending love which the followers of the Bahá'í Faith feel for their fellow-men, of whatever race, creed, class or nation, is neither mysterious nor can it be said to have been artificially stimulated. It is both spontaneous and genuine. They whose hearts are warmed by the energizing influence of God's creative love cherish His creatures for His sake, and recognize in every human face a sign of His reflected glory.

Of such men and women it may be truly said that to them "every foreign land is a fatherland, and every fatherland a foreign land." For their citizenship, it must be remembered, is in the Kingdom of Baha'u'llah.

SHOGHI EFFENDI: *World Order of Baha'u'llah*, Pages: 197-198

The supreme need of humanity is cooperation and reciprocity. The stronger the ties of fellowship and solidarity amongst men, the greater will be the power of constructiveness and accomplishment in all the planes of human activity. Without cooperation and reciprocal attitude the individual member of human society remains self-centered, uninspired by altruistic purposes, limited and solitary in development

ˆABDU'L-BAHA: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Page: 338

It is evident, therefore, that the foundation of real brotherhood, the cause of loving cooperation and reciprocity and the source of real kindness and unselfish devotion is none other than the breaths of the Holy Spirit. Without this influence and animus it is impossible. We may be able to realize some degrees of fraternity through other motives, but these are limited associations and subject to change. When human brotherhood is founded upon the Holy Spirit, it is eternal, changeless, unlimited.

ˆABDU'L-BAHA: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Page: 392

Spiritual brotherhood may be likened to the light, while the souls of humankind are as lanterns. The incandescent lamps here are many, yet the light is one.

ˆABDU'L-BAHA: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Pages: 129-130

How good it is if the friends be as close as sheaves of light, if they stand together side by side in a firm unbroken line. For now have the rays of reality from the Sun of the world of existence, united in adoration all the worshippers of this light; and these rays have, through infinite grace, gathered all peoples together within this wide-spreading shelter; therefore must all souls become as one soul, and all hearts as one heart. Let all be set free from the multiple identities that were born of passion and desire, and in the oneness of their love for God find a new way of life.

ˆABDU'L-BAHA: *Selections ... 'Abdu'l-Baha*, Page: 76

Be in perfect unity. Never become angry with one another. Let your eyes be directed toward the kingdom of truth and not toward the world of creation. Love the creatures for the sake of God and not for themselves. You will never become angry or impatient if you love them for the sake of God. Humanity is not perfect. There are imperfections in every human being, and you will always become unhappy if you look toward the people themselves. But if you look toward God, you will love them and be kind to them, for the world of God is the world of perfection and complete mercy. Therefore, do not look at the shortcomings of anybody; see with the sight of forgiveness. The imperfect eye beholds imperfections. The eye that covers faults looks toward the Creator of souls.

ˆABDU'L-BAHA: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Page: 93

Building the Qualities that Promote Unity

Purpose: To understand the importance of practicing behaviors in order to acquire specific virtues.
To understand how acquiring virtues leads to more loving communities.

Fireside/Intergenerational Activity for all ages
90 minutes—2 hours

Carefully prepare the learning environment to reflect hospitality, beauty, friendliness and love. Lovingly greet the guests as they arrive. You may also wish to have soft, instrumental music playing as the guests come in.

Opening prayer(s). When possible, include the use of music, recorded or sung. Especially consider inviting friends of all ages, young children through the aged, to contribute to these opening prayers. This will be most effective if you ask several children, youth, adults or seniors to come prepared to share their prayer with the group.

Introduction

Begin by explaining to the guests or participants that the purpose of the gathering is to begin to understand how becoming more aware of and practicing virtues in our lives can help make families and communities more loving and peaceful.

We Are One Video

Have the guests watch the video (or telecast) of “We Are One” (approximately 30 minutes). If many small children are present, it may be a good idea to do the activity first and show the videotape later.

Learning Experience

In advance prepare the following materials:

- Handouts of various spiritual qualities—a different quality for each group of 3-10 people. Limit the number of groups to five or fewer. The quotations and stories on the following pages come from chapters of the book, *Thoughts—Education for Peace and One World*, compiled by Irene Taafaki, and are examples of possible spiritual qualities to use. The book is available from the Bahá’í Distribution Service: 1-800-999-9019.
- *The Virtues Guide* by Linda and Dan Popov, published by The Virtues Project, Inc. is also a good resource. Visit their web site: www.virtuesproject.com or call: 604-537-4647 for more information.
- Small bags with 3-5 different items for each group. The contents of each sack should be unique, but there should be the same number of items in each sack. Make the items fun and diverse—anything from staplers to apples to wigs.
- Make enough copies of the directions for each group.

Organizing the intergenerational activity:

- Talk briefly about the importance of identifying and building spiritual qualities within ourselves, our children and our community that will help us coexist in unity and peace.
- Describe the activity to the participants—We are going to divide into new “family” groups and explore one of the qualities that will help us and our community become more loving and united. Each family group will select one spiritual quality handout to explore. You will read the handout aloud together, making sure that each member of the group has some level of understanding about “what the spiritual quality looks like.” Discuss examples you have seen of people demonstrating this quality. How is this quality essential for creating a community of peace and unity? Then prepare a skit that demonstrates the spiritual quality without naming it. The audience will guess what it is when your skit is over. For props, you will receive a bag of “fun” items. Use every item in your bag during your performance. The skits should not be longer than three minutes.
- Divide participants into groups of 3-10, including different ages and family members in each group. This might be done by counting off, or by handing out small pieces of colored paper as participants arrive and then grouping by color, etc.
- Give each group a directions sheet, a spiritual quality handout and a bag with various items in it.
- Repeat the directions simply: Read the spiritual quality. Discuss the spiritual quality. Create a simple, three minute skit. Return in 30-40 minutes prepared to perform.

Possible spiritual qualities to explore:

Caring	Love
Compassion	Patience
Courtesy	Peacefulness
Forgiveness	Respect
Humility	Tolerance
Justice	Unity

Closing

Bring everyone back together. How did watching or participating in these simple skits help you think of new, practical ways to practice specific spiritual qualities in your lives?

Invite participants to investigate the Bahá'í Faith.

Close the session with prayer, either spoken, chanted or sung. Include the younger members of the group in the closing prayers.

Caring

I hope that each one of you will become just, and direct your thoughts towards the unity of mankind; that you will never harm your neighbours nor speak ill of any one; that you will respect the rights of all men, and be more concerned for the interests of others than for your own.

‘ABDU'L-BAHA: *Paris Talks*, Page: 160

Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, Page 285

... let thy aim be the good of all and then carry on thy task in life.

Bhagavad Gita, 3, v. 20



... Mrs. Getsinger was in Akká having made the pilgrimage to the prison city to see the Master. She was with Him one day when he said to her that He was too busy to call upon a friend of His who was very ill and poor and He wished her to go in His place. Take him food and care for him as I have been doing, He concluded. He told her where this man was to be found and she went gladly, proud that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá should trust her with this mission

She returned quickly. ‘Master,’ she exclaimed, ‘surely you cannot realise to what a terrible place you sent me. I almost fainted from the awful stench, the filthy rooms, the degrading condition of that man and his house. I fled lest I contract some terrible disease.’

Sadly and sternly ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regarded her. ‘Dost thou desire to serve God,’ He said, ‘serve thy fellow man for in him dost thou see the image and likeness of God.’ He told her to go back to this man’s house. If it is filthy she should clean it; if this brother of yours is dirty, bathe him; if he is hungry, feed him. Do not return until this is done. Many times had He done this for him and cannot she serve him once?

Howard Colby Ives, *Portals to Freedom*, Page 85



Androcles and the Lion

In Rome, many centuries ago, there lived a poor slave whose name was Androcles. His master was a cruel man and so unkind to him that one day Androcles ran away.

He hid himself in a wild wood for many days. There was no food to be found and so Androcles became weak and sick, so much so that he thought he would die. He crept into a cave and fell asleep.

After a while a great noise woke him up. A lion had come into the cave and was roaring loudly. Androcles was badly frightened, for he felt sure the beast would kill him. However, he soon saw that the beast was not angry, but that he limped as though his foot hurt him.

Then Androcles wasn't afraid any more. He lifted the lion's paw from the ground and saw there was a long sharp thorn sticking into it. He gave the thorn a strong quick pull and out it came. The lion was much relieved and very grateful. He jumped about like a dog and licked the hands and feet of his new friend.

Androcles was not at all afraid after this and when night came, the lion and Androcles slept side by side.

For a long time the lion brought food to Androcles every day and the two became such good friends that Androcles found his new life a very happy one.

One day soldiers were passing through the wood. They captured Androcles and dragged him back to Rome.

It was the law at that time that any slave who ran away from his master should be made to fight a hungry lion. So a fierce lion was shut up in a cage for a while and a time was set for a fight. Thousands of people gathered to see Androcles fight the lion, but when the lion rushed into the arena Androcles gave a cry of gladness, not fear, for the lion was his old friend. The people expected to see him killed. Instead they saw him hugging a lion who lay down at his feet. Androcles said, 'I am a man, but no man has befriended me. This lion is my brother.' They were then set free and lived together for many happy years.

Traditional



(avoiding) Backbiting

...backbiting quencheth the light of the heart, and extinguisheth the life of the soul.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, Page 265

... good is restraint in speech... [he] who is controlled in tongue, who speaks wisely... sweet, indeed, is his speech.

Dhammapada, XXV, v. 361,363, Page 81

O Son of Man! Breathe not the sins of others so long as thou art thyself a sinner. Shouldst thou transgress this command, accursed wouldst thou be, and to this I bear witness.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, Arabic *Hidden Words*, no. 27

... the tongue is a smouldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison. Material fire consumeth the body, whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endureth a century.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, PAGE 264



Control Your Tongue

One day a rich lady went to a saintly man to ask his advice. She said that she wished to be a saintly woman, but there was one fault which she found difficult to overcome. The saint told her that there was no fault one could not overcome if one wanted to overcome it.

Then the lady told the saint how she was in the habit of gossiping about others and how she had failed to overcome that fault although she had tried very hard.

'Can you help me?' she asked the holy man. 'I will do anything you ask me to do.'

'Very well,' answered the holy man, 'go to the market and buy a fowl. On your way back home, pluck the fine feathers of the fowl and throw them on the street as you walk along. Come and see me after you have done this.'

The rich lady was surprised to hear this, but she respected the holy man. So she did as she was told and faithfully obeyed his orders.

The next day she went and told the holy man that she had obeyed his commands.

'Very good,' answered the saint. 'You have done the first part of your task very well. Now comes the second part. Go to the market and walk along the street again and try to pick up the feathers which you threw on the road yesterday.'

'That's impossible!' said the rich lady. 'The wind has already blown them in all directions. How can I collect the feathers again?'

'That is so,' answered the holy man. 'The same happens when you gossip about others. Your words are passed from mouth to mouth and it is impossible to stop the evil spreading, once it has started. The best thing to do is not to start it.'

The lady was so impressed by this object lesson that she went home determined never to speak evil of anybody ever again.

Traditional



Humility

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

The Holy Bible, Matthew 5:5

Be... a fruit upon the tree of humility.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, Page 285

Humility exalteth man to the heaven of glory and power, whilst pride abaseth him to the depths of wretchedness and degradation.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, Page 30

...man must become evanescent in God. Must forget his own selfish conditions that he may thus arise to the station of sacrifice. It should be to such a degree that if he sleep, it should not be for pleasure, but to rest the body in order to do better, to speak better, to explain more beautifully, to serve the servants of God and to prove the truths. When he remains awake, he should seek to be attentive, serve the Cause of God and sacrifice his own stations for those of God. When he attains to this station, the confirmations of the Holy Spirit will surely reach him, and man with this power can withstand all who inhabit the earth.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Bahá'í World Faith*, Page 384



A man took his son into a beautiful garden where many people had gathered to pray. After an hour of chanting prayers, the boy looked around and observed that many of the worshippers were lost not in prayer but in sleep. He turned to his father and asked, 'Are we not better than those who are sleeping instead of praying?' The father simply replied, 'We might have been better had we not asked this question.'

Traditional



Patience

He, verily, shall increase the reward of them that endure with patience.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Gleanings*, Page: 129

O SON OF MAN! For everything there is a sign. The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under My trials.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Arabic Hidden Words*, Page: 48

O believers, be patient, and vie you in patience...haply so you will prosper.

MUHAMMAD, *Qur'án*, III, v. 200, p. 99



Bruce and the Spider

A long time ago there lived a King of Scotland named Robert Bruce. He was a greatly troubled man because his country was at war with England and the English were winning. In battle after battle they drove back the Scottish army until at last the King himself had to retreat to the mountains to save his life.

Wandering desperately through the mountain forests, cold and hungry and exhausted, at last the King found a miserable little wooden hut empty and deserted. Glad of any kind of shelter, he lay down on the floor of the hut in deep despair.

'There is no use in going on,' he thought. 'The enemy has thrown back our armies six times. We can never repulse them. I have failed my people. I might as well give up.'

At that moment the King noticed a little grey spider spinning a long thread from one of the rafters. The spider swung along on the thread in an effort to attach the other end to another rafter so he could start spinning his web. But the thread broke and the spider fell to the floor of the hut.

A little dazed perhaps, but with no hesitation at all, the spider climbed up the wall and began spinning again. He kept patiently at it until the thread was long enough. Then he again swung himself to the end of it and tried once more to attach it to the rafter across the corner. But again the spider fell to the floor.

And once more he climbed up and began again.

Six times the spider's thread broke. Six times he fell to the ground. Six times he began. Six times he failed.

Robert Bruce, the King of Scotland, watched in fascination. He became so absorbed in the little spider's efforts that for a time he forgot his own troubles.

The spider did not give up even when he failed for the sixth time. He just tried again, and this time, on the seventh try, he was successful. The end of the thread held! The spider attached it to the far rafter and began spinning his web.

Robert Bruce arose and bowed low to the tiny grey creature. 'O little spider!' he cried. 'You have taught me a wonderful lesson in patience and persistence. You were not ready to give up, as I was. No matter how often you failed, you were always willing to try again. Perhaps I too shall win if I keep on trying.'

And so, though he was still cold and hungry and weary, he was no longer disheartened. Watching the spider had given him new strength and courage. He buckled on his sword, gathered together his scattered armies and, with the example of the courageous spider to inspire him, King Robert Bruce let his men, on the seventh try, to victory.

Traditional



Unity

So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.

BAHA'U'LLAH: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, Page: 14

Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body.

BAHA'U'LLAH: *The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, Page: 40

What is real unity? When we observe the human world, we find various collective expressions of unity therein. For instance, man is distinguished from the animal by his degree, or kingdom. This comprehensive distinction includes all the posterity of Adam and constitutes one great household or human family, which may be considered the fundamental or physical unity of mankind...The unity which is productive of unlimited results is first a unity of mankind which recognizes that all are sheltered beneath the overshadowing glory of the All-Glorious, that all are servants of one God; for all breathe the same atmosphere, live upon the same earth, move beneath the same heavens, receive effulgence from the same sun and are under the protection of one God. This is the most great unity, and its results are lasting if humanity adheres to it

ABDU'L-BAHA: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Pages: 190-191



The Bundle of Sticks

There was once a farmer with several sons who could never agree among themselves. He had often told them how foolish they were to be always quarrelling, but they kept on and paid no attention to his advice.

One day the father called his sons before him and showed them a bundle of sticks tied tightly together. 'See which one of you can break this bundle in two,' he commanded.

Each son in turn took the bundle in his hands and tried his best to break it. They all tried, but in vain, for the bundle was so strong that not one of them could even bend it. At last they gave it back to their father saying, "We cannot break it."

Then the father untied the bundle and gave a single stick to each of his sons. 'Now see what you can do,' he said. Each one broke his stick with the greatest of ease.

'My sons,' said the wise father, 'you, like these sticks, will be strong if you stand together; but once you quarrel and become separated, then you are destroyed.'

Traditional



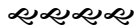
Demonstrating Spiritual Qualities--Directions

Read aloud about the spiritual quality you have selected. Be sure to make it simple enough for the youngest person...and everyone else in your group to have some level of understanding about "what the quality looks like." Discuss examples you have seen of people demonstrating this spiritual quality.

How is this quality essential for creating a community of peace and unity?

Prepare a simple skit that demonstrates the spiritual quality without naming it. The other friends will guess what it is when your skit is finished. Use every item in your bag during your performance.

Skit length—under 3 minutes.



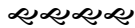
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